

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING PROCESS IN NEWCASTLE
AND THE BROADER HUNTER REGION**

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 18/10/2014

Partially Confidential

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The Reverend F Nile

Chairman Public Planning Inquiry (re: Newcastle Rail Line)

I wish commend you for the courage you have shown in conducting this inquiry. Optimistically you will be allowed to be an advocate for the people of Newcastle who have been left out in the cold with regard to credible information on cost and detail about the cutting of rail services into Newcastle City. The proposal does not appear to be in the best interest of the community.

We the public have limited information as to why it is necessary to cut the rail line. Not enough consideration has been put into the inconvenience this action will cause the community. We are fed scraps of assorted costs and sketches but there has been no coordinated plan or costing released on this exercise so the public can make an informed decision. There appear to be an enormous amount of money, \$380 million? that will be used to put the termination phase into action without release of what comes next.

There is a proposed (pie in the sky) story about a light rail that will not necessarily run along the rail corridor. Again no costing or timeline information has not been released for serious community discussion. If it is a serious proposal why not release details of the costing, the planned route and the timeline for the completion. Any light solution not in the existing rail corridor should be in place prior cutting the heavy rail. Part of the proceeds from the sale of the Newcastle Port should be allocated to guarantee this project. We are concerned that once the rail is cut there will be no or insufficient funding to complete any further work. Newcastle residents are continually let down by the Sydney/State Government as shown by the back flip on funding for the Art Gallery.

What is to happen to travellers, for example the blind, elderly, mothers with prams, members of the public who have luggage, the young people who come from the suburbs and from the Upper Hunter valley with their surf boards. Will all those travellers have to struggle on and off the bus at Broadmeadow or Wickham. At present the existing bus service do not connect with the train what chance will there be when there are insufficient buses to meet with the Broadmeadow trains.

A problem also exists with Parking, it is one of the biggest problems over all in Newcastle. The parking situation at Broadmeadow is already insufficient with residents in surrounding streets unable to park in front of their property.

Why would the excellent Newcastle Train Station be mothballed in favour of the proposed Wickham Structure (a Sketch, again no plan available) which appears not to offer basic shelter from the weather. It has only has a roof with no sides which will allow wind and rain to make those waiting cold and uncomfortable.

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We are about to have a Intercity University Campus come to Newcastle City Centre where there is a station, Civic, that student can board and leave the train immediately over road from the campus. The present station Newcastle Station could be better utilised by converted into a Boutique Hotel and bring more business to the City also tours of the Hunter valley so many small businesses would benefit. Visitor could leave cars at home and travel by train to Newcastle and enjoy many beaches, cafes and Theatres. It just takes some initiative. Newcastle has been badly serviced by State Rail when compared to the promotion of the Blue Mountains or South Coast.

The big question is why? who will benefit? It is proposed that further funding will be reliant on the sale of land along the rail corridor. We know that the strip of land the train run on has not been under mined, therefore it is ripe for a developer with the possibility of a twenty storey high building strip turning Newcastle into a mini Gold Coast. The existing 7 storey height limit is being changed to a 20 storey limit (how many brown paper bags were involved in this decision) If this happen the Cathedral which it was commissioned by Governor Lachlan Macquarie to be the highest point of the City will be locked out from view from Stockton, Nobbies, and the Cruise Ships.

I think (ICAC) should also have an investigation into the methods used into how decisions were made and who will or would have benefit? There has been numerous public meetings against the rail termination that have been absolutely ignored by the Government. When one scrutinizes the numbers of local members who have been found guilty of taking illegal payments it's easy to surmise how these decisions are made. There should be large penalties for people who deliberately and unlawfully

obstruct the smooth running of the city, just look at the fiasco we have just come through in Newcastle

There are some people who are in agreement with the trains Termination in December however when I have questioned or discussed with them they never or rarely travel by train and say they are relying on media reports that it will open up the City. Reports say the public want to walk easily through from Hunter Street to the water front, that can be done with ease at present . I wonder why building structures over the rail corridor, effectively boxing in areas and allowing for new access ways or construction above the rail hasn't been considered This situation can be seen in many in other countries. There are many other ways of saving the line has not been submitted or considered.
Thank you and kind regards